

BILLY

Billy was small for his age and in the xxx grade. His clothes were usually torn and dirty. He and his six siblings have experienced several out of home placements but are currently living with Billy's mother and her boyfriend. It was not difficult to understand his need for attention. What was hard to see was the way he sought it out. In fact, he was a master at getting attention. The problem, however, was that the attention he got was usually always painful. One tactic which almost always worked was to sneak up in back of one of his bigger and older classmates when they weren't expecting it and to make snorkeling sounds with his nose while calling them and their family names. Because the snorkeling sounds would reach a particularly irritating and specific pitch, they were often accompanied by snot. This last irritant occurred regularly, especially when Billy had a cold. Because he excelled in this venture, he was usually punched and pounded several times by the larger boy, until the fight which he could never win was broken up.

Perhaps what was most disturbing about these incidents was that almost immediately after the blood was wiped from his face and the crying subsided, you could see the wheels in his mind turning as he began to plot his next plan of attack.

Task: _____

Answer the following questions in your group.

1. Would you intervene?
2. Why or why not?
3. What would you do?

Adapted from a presentation given by G. Gordon Williamson, Ph.D., John F. Kennedy Medical Center, Edison, New Jersey, "Enhancing Adaptation and Resilience in Infants and Toddlers," 1996.